



THE PHYSICIAN'S *Bookshelf*

OBSTETRIC PRACTICE—Harold Speert, M.D., Associate in Obstetrics and Gynecology, Columbia University College of Physicians and Surgeons; Assistant Attending Obstetrician and Gynecologist, The Presbyterian Hospital; Alan F. Guttmacher, M.D. Director of the Dept. of Obstetrics and Gynecology, the Mount Sinai Hospital, Clinical Professor of Obstetrics and Gynecology, Columbia University College of Physicians and Surgeons. Landsberger Medical Books, Inc. New York, 1956, 478 pages. \$7.00.

This is intended to be a handbook for the general practitioner, proposed as a "practical, up-to-date guide" for him in the management of pregnancy and its complications. It impresses this reviewer as being a very general survey of current obstetrical practice, and is modern in its approach. The concepts represent the combined thinking of the two authors and the general practices of their respective institutions (Sloane and Mt. Sinai in New York), which are not always in agreement (example—management of diabetes in late pregnancy). The advice and recommendations regarding normal pregnancy and hygiene are sound and in accord with current obstetric practice.

The handbook contains a good index. There is no bibliography, which is proper as this is not intended to be a textbook. Minor editorial objections may be noted, such as the use of the word "principal" for "principle" (p. 233).

This volume may be generally recommended for its intended purpose, and will find usefulness in the hands of the general practitioner who wishes to bring himself up to date in matters obstetrical on a rather broad scale.

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THE MANAGEMENT OF MENSTRUAL DISORDERS—C. Frederic Fluhmann, B.A., M.D., C.M., Clinical Professor of Obstetrics and Gynecology, Stanford University School of Medicine, W. B. Saunders, Philadelphia, 1956. 350 pages, 121 figures, \$8.50.

This is an excellent book, by an erudite author. It deals with all facets of the complex process that is menstruation, and is not confined merely to the management of menstrual disorders. The latter occupies only one phase of the over-all discussion. The textbook (for that is what this is) begins with an inclusive historical discussion of the concepts of menstruation. Following is a complete picture of the hormones involved in the process and their endocrinologic controls. Menstrual disorders are then thoroughly analyzed, based upon the author's extensive knowledge of and personal work done in this field. Specific methods of management are presented for the various abnormalities. The climacteric and menopause are very completely covered, and the book concludes with a discussion of clinical usage and commercial preparations of sex hormones.

This book can be recommended for the obstetrical specialist, for the internist, and for the endocrinologist. The clinical approach is emphasized throughout. The volume is a worthy successor to the author's previous text on menstrual disorders published in 1939.

OF RESEARCH PEOPLE—George E. Burch, M.D., F.A.C.P., Henderson Professor of Medicine, Tulane University School of Medicine, New Orleans, Grune and Stratton, New York, 1955. 56 pages, \$3.00.

The author has written a careful and thought-provoking essay upon a subject of concern directly to professional workers in the biologic sciences, and to the mass of lay consumers eager to learn the truth, but often forced to listen to prejudiced accounts unfortunately colored. Dr. Burch's carefully balanced and precise sentences demonstrate a type of insight not often found in essays of this character. There is a message for the investigator himself, which outlines his potential credulities and pitfalls. Although being a professional research worker is a full-time job, most investigators are pressured into spending their potentially productive time in dilettante activities, such as dispatching, speech-making, promotional activities and attending endless and meaningless committees. For the research assistant and research fellow, there is sound advice, especially in regard to the tragedy of "taking one's self too seriously." The research technician and other personnel, who often clutter the landscape of the research environment, may learn how to better evaluate their duties and conduct themselves in accordance. The "Research Director" comes in for his share of appreciation, terse and to the point. For the University Administrative Officer, the essay is a must. All in all it is sound and delightful reading. Unfortunately the book is hampered by illustrations appropriate for a Sunday comic strip but certainly unfit for so sapient a contribution.

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CASIMIR FUNK—Pioneer in Vitamins and Hormones—Benjamin Harow. Dodd, Mead & Company, New York, N. Y., 1955. 209 pages, \$4.00.

The author has written an interesting biography of a restless person, who despite this attribute (usually a handicap in a scientist) was able to make significant research contributions. That Casimir Funk is a genius of unusual quality no one can deny, especially in the light of his preparatory training with its paucity of supervision, and the hazards of constantly changing his areas of work, intellectual and geographic. Though he often worked under circumstances which were inadequate and discouraging, he still managed to make some important basic contributions to biologic science in the fields of experimental nutrition, the chemistry of hormones, and especially in the commercial production of medicinal agents. No one could have been successful in these latter circumstances without basic knowledge of the principles of chemistry and manufacturing techniques, a singleness of purpose, and an outstanding devotion to an ideal. It is a pity that a man of such unusual talent should have had to indulge so many interests, many not to his complete satisfaction, and always under sub-optimal circumstances, in so many different laboratories.